

3.12 Recreation and Open Space

GOAL 1201

Monroe County shall provide a recreation and open space system to conserve valuable natural resources and to provide recreational opportunities adequate to serve the present and future population of Monroe County, including permanent residents and visitors. [9J-5.014(3)(a)]

Objective 1201.1

Monroe County shall ensure that at the time a development permit is issued, adequate park and recreation lands and facilities are available to serve the development at the adopted level of service standards concurrent with the impacts of such development . [9J-5.013(2)(b)3]

Policy 1201.1.1

Monroe County hereby adopts the following level of service standards to achieve Objective 1201.1, and shall use these standards as the basis for determining recreation land and facility capacity:

Level of Service Standards for Neighborhood and Community Parks:

1. 0.82 acres per 1000 functional population of passive, resource-based neighborhood and community parks; and
2. 0.82 acres per 1000 functional population of activity-based neighborhood and community parks within each of the Upper Keys, Middle Keys, and Lower Keys subareas. [9J-5.014(3)(c)4]

Policy 1201.1.2

Monroe County hereby adopts the following standards as goal levels of service. They shall be used as advisory guidelines only, and shall not be used for concurrency purposes.

Goal Levels of Service for Specific Recreational Facilities:

1. one (1) baseball/softball field for every 7,000 functional population;
2. one (1) tennis court for every 6,000 functional population;
3. one (1) equipped play area for every 10,000 functional population;
4. one (1) picnic area for every 15,000 functional population; and
5. one (1) mile of recreational beach shoreline for every 100,000 functional population.

These goal levels of service shall be applied to each of the Upper, Middle and Lower Keys subareas. [9J-5.014(3)(c)4]

Policy 1201.1.3

Monroe County shall periodically review and revise the level of service standards and advisory guidelines in policies 1201.1.1 and 1201.1.2 based on the most recent survey of community preferences.

Policy 1201.1.4

By January 4, 1997, Monroe County shall adopt Land Development Regulations providing a Concurrency Management System (see Capital Improvements Policy 1401.4.5). The Concurrency Management System shall ensure that no permits will be issued for new development or redevelopment which would cause recreation lands and facilities to operate below the adopted level of service.

Policy 1201.1.5

Monroe County shall review all legal subdivision plats to determine any dedication of property to the County for park lands. Those properties shall be utilized as needed to meet recreational requirements.

Objective 1201.2

Monroe County shall secure additional acreage for use and/or development of resource-based and activity-based neighborhood and community parks consistent with the adopted level of service standards. [9J-5.014(3)(b)3]

Policy 1201.2.1

Land required to eliminate existing deficiencies in neighborhood and community parks shall be made available through one or a combination of the following mechanisms:

1. development of park and recreation facilities on land which is already owned by the County but which is not being used for park and recreation purposes;
2. acquisition of new park sites;
3. interlocal agreements with the Monroe County School Board for use of existing school-based park facilities by county residents;
4. interlocal agreements with incorporated cities within Monroe County for use of existing city-owned park facilities by county residents;
5. intergovernmental agreements with agencies of the state and federal governments for use of existing publicly-owned lands or facilities by county residents; and
6. long-term lease arrangements or joint use agreements with private entities for use of private park facilities by county residents.

The same mechanisms shall be used for purposes of providing adequate land to satisfy the demand for parks and recreation facilities resulting from future residential development. [9J-5.014(3)(c)2 and 5]

Monroe County shall not rely upon joint use facilities to eliminate existing deficiencies or meet future LOS requirements until interlocal, intergovernmental, or private joint use agreements are executed which demonstrate that the facilities will be available for general use to Monroe County residents to meet peak season, weekend, or time of day recreation demands. [9J-5.013(3)(c)2 and 5]

Policy 1201.2.2

By January 4, 1998, Monroe County shall identify potential sites which could be used for the provision of park and recreation facilities. These shall include:

1. sites which could be used to correct or improve existing parks and recreation deficiencies; and
2. sites which could be used for development of future neighborhood and community parks to serve the anticipated needs of the future population.

Candidate sites shall include neighborhood and community parks already owned by Monroe County and sites as listed above in Policy 1201.2.1. [9J-5.014(3)(c)2]

Policy 1201.2.3

Priority shall be given to locating new neighborhood and community parks in communities which demonstrate the greatest deficiencies in parks and recreation. [9J-5.014(3)(c)2 and 5]

Policy 1201.2.4

In selecting sites for future activity-based neighborhood and community parks, Monroe County shall give priority to sites which have been previously disturbed or scarified. The County shall avoid acquiring sites for activity-based parks which involve potential disturbances to sensitive natural resources including but not limited to:

1. high quality undisturbed pineland and hammock vegetation;
2. documented habitat of species designated as rare or endangered by the state and federal governments;
3. undisturbed beach/berm; and
4. undisturbed mangrove, salt marsh, buttonwood and freshwater wetlands.

When park sites are acquired which include sensitive natural resources, then the park master plan (see Policy 1201.3.6 and 1201.3.8) and the annual park management plan (see Policy 1201.11.2 and 1201.11.3) shall designate such areas for passive recreation and shall avoid potential adverse impacts of park development and use upon those resources. [9J-5.014(3)(c)2, 3 and 5]

Policy 1201.2.5

By January 4, 1998, conceptual plans shall be developed for candidate park sites. These plans shall be adequate for purposes of assessing suitability of candidate sites for park development, the nature of facilities which could be accommodated on the site, and

preliminary costs of park development. The conceptual site plans shall be made available to the Monroe County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) for review during consideration of park acquisition alternatives. [9J-5.014(3)(c)2]

Policy 1201.2.6

Funding for land acquisition for county-owned neighborhood and community parks shall be obtained from a combination of local and state funding sources, including but not limited to:

1. Florida Recreation Development Assistance Program;
2. Preservation 2000 Trust Fund
3. Conservation and Recreation Lands (CARL) Program;
4. Land and Water Conservation Fund;
5. Urban Parks and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) Action Grants;
6. local funds made available from fair share community park impact fees for growth-related needs (paid pursuant to the Monroe County Land Development Regulations); and
7. local funds as may be made available through special appropriation by the BOCC. [9J-5.014(3)(c)2 and 5]

Policy 1201.2.7

Acquisition of neighborhood and community park sites shall be undertaken as part of the Monroe County Natural Heritage and Park Program. (See Future Land Use Objective 102.4 and related policies.) [9J-5.014(3)(c)2 and 5]

Objective 1201.3

Monroe County shall make available adequate active recreation facilities at county-owned resource-based and community-based neighborhood and community parks consistent with the adopted level of service standards and the concurrency management system. [9J-5.014(3)(b)3]

Policy 1201.3.1

Programming for active recreation facilities at neighborhood and community parks shall reflect the needs and desires of residents living within the service areas of such parks. Public input into facilities programming shall be solicited through neighborhood public participation programs designed to identify local preferences for specific types of recreational facilities. [9J-5.014(3)(c)5]

Policy 1201.3.2

Priority shall be given to developing active recreation facilities at neighborhood and community parks which are not currently served with such facilities. [9J-5.014(3)(c)5]

Policy 1201.3.3

By January 4, 1998, Monroe County shall complete a master plan for each existing county-owned neighborhood and community park. [9J-5.014(3)(c)5]

Policy 1201.3.4

A park master plan shall be completed for all new neighborhood and community parks by September 30th of the year following the acquisition of real property or rights therein for purposes of outdoor recreation. Exceptions shall occur when park master plans are required as a condition of an intergovernmental agreement, interlocal agreement, joint use agreement or long-term lease arrangement; in such instances the master plan shall be prepared prior to acquisition of property rights to serve outdoor recreation. [9J-5.014(3)(c)3 and 5]

Policy 1201.3.5

Park master plans shall be consistent with the goals, objectives and policies established in the following:

1. the Monroe County Park and Recreation Plan (upon its adoption by the BOCC) (see Objective 1201.10); and
2. the Land Use and Coastal Management Elements of the Monroe County Comprehensive Plan. [9J-5.014(3)(c)3 and 5]

Policy 1201.3.6

Park master plans shall address the following issues:

1. public uses and facilities;
2. public access;
3. compatibility with adjacent land uses;
4. protection of sensitive natural resources; and
5. restoration of disturbed lands. [9J-5.014(3)(c)2, 3 and 5]

Policy 1201.3.7

For parks which include beaches and shoreline areas, park master plans shall provide for the maintenance and/or improvement of existing levels of beach and shore access. The park master plan shall be consistent with the Monroe County Public Access Plan. (See Conservation and Coastal Management Objective 213.1.1.) [9J-5.014(3)(c)3 and 5]

Policy 1201.3.8

Park master plans shall be designed so as to avoid and/or mitigate adverse impacts of park use upon sensitive natural resources. Such areas include, but are not limited to the following:

1. high quality undisturbed pineland and hammock vegetation;

2. documented habitat of species designated as rare or endangered by the state and federal governments;
3. undisturbed beach/berm; and
4. undisturbed mangrove, salt marsh, buttonwood and freshwater wetlands.

Public use shall be directed away from or minimized in such areas through controlled access and limitations on permitted activities. [9J-5.014(3)(c)3 and 5]

Policy 1201.3.9

Park master plans shall identify areas of disturbed wetlands as potential wetlands mitigation sites. (See Conservation and Coastal Management Objective 204.3 and related policies.) [9J-5.014(3)(c)2 and 5]

Policy 1201.3.10

Park master plans shall include provisions for the removal of invasive, exotic vegetation. [9J-5.014(3)(c)2 and 5]

Policy 1201.3.11

Park master plans shall specify the use of native vegetation for landscaping and for restoration of areas from which invasive, exotic vegetation is removed. [9J-5.014(3)(c)2 and 5]

Objective 1201.4

By January 4, 1997, Monroe County shall revise the Land Development Regulations to permit and facilitate park-related development activities at county-owned sites. [9J-5.014(3)(b)3]

Policy 1201.4.1

Existing county-owned neighborhood and community parks shall be assigned to the Park and Refuge Land Use District. [9J-5.014(3)(c)1]

Policy 1201.4.2

Upon fee simple acquisition, new county-owned neighborhood and community park sites shall be reassigned to the Park and Refuge Land Use District. [9J-5.014(3)(c)1]

Policy 1201.4.3

Regulations pertaining to the Park and Refuge Land Use District which shall be revised to facilitate park and recreation uses shall include the following:

1. land use intensities;
2. bulk regulations;
3. development standards;
4. environmental standards;

5. park and loading standards; and
6. landscaping standards. [9J-5.014(3)(c)1]

Objective 1201.5

By January 4, 1997, Monroe County shall adopt revisions to the Land Development Regulations pertaining to fair share community park impact fees which will assist the county with maintaining adopted levels of service for parks and recreation facilities. [9J-5.014(3)(b)2]

Policy 1201.5.1

Monroe County shall continue to collect fair share community park impact fees for any new permanent and transient residential units (including units constructed on existing platted lots) prior to issuance of a Certificate of Occupancy. [9J-5.014(3)(c)1]

Objective 1201.6

Monroe County shall continue to ensure access to publicly-owned recreation and open space areas and facilities, including beach and shoreline areas, for all Monroe County residents and visitors, including the handicapped and disabled. [9J-5.014(3)(b)1]

Policy 1201.6.1

By January 4, 1998, Monroe County shall complete a master plan for all county-owned neighborhood and community parks (see Policies 1201.3.3 through 1201.3.11). These plans shall include, among other items:

1. an assessment of the adequacy of public access; and
2. recommended public access improvements, which may include but not be limited to, additional parking, boat ramps and handicapped access facilities. [9J-5.014(3)(c)3]

Policy 1201.6.2

Beginning in 1998, Monroe County shall prepare annual park and recreation facility management plans. Among other items, the annual management plans shall address continued management requirements needed to ensure safe public access. (See Objective 1201.11 and related policies.) [9J-5.014(3)(c)3]

Policy 1201.6.3

By January 4, 1998, Monroe County shall complete a Public Access Plan for unincorporated Monroe County. This plan shall address publicly-owned and privately-owned lands. (See Conservation and Coastal Management Objective 213.1 and related policies.) [9J-5.014(3)(c)3]

Policy 1201.6.4

By January 4, 1998, Monroe County shall complete a Parks and Recreation Plan (see Policy 1201.10.1). This Plan shall, among other items, evaluate the need for and feasibility of a combined trail and bikeway system which links parks and recreation areas with one another as well as with residential areas. (See Objective 1201.10) [9J-5.014(3)(c)3]

Objective 1201.7

Monroe County shall implement an ongoing coordination program with community groups and commercial enterprises owning private recreational facilities to make available such facilities for use by county residents. [9J-5.014(3)(b)2 and 4]

Policy 1201.7.1

By January 4, 1998, Monroe County shall develop standard written agreements for summer recreation programs at destination resorts, private recreation clubs, private schools, churches and other community groups owning open space and/or recreation facilities. The County shall seek to execute these agreements with such groups on a regular annual basis. [9J-5.014(3)(c)2 and 5]

Policy 1201.7.2

Monroe County shall encourage the use of privately-owned parks and recreation facilities for public recreation purposes through allocation of county funds for construction and maintenance of recreation facilities on privately-owned lands. [9J-5.014(3)(c)2 and 5]

Policy 1201.7.3

Monroe County shall encourage community groups and commercial enterprises to develop and maintain private recreational facilities consistent with County design guidelines. The County shall provide planning assistance to such groups. Assistance efforts shall be directed to areas where:

1. there is an existing deficit of activity-based neighborhood and community parks; and
2. there are no future opportunities for public recreation sites.

Objective 1201.8

Monroe County shall implement an ongoing coordination program with other city, state and federal governmental agencies to make city, state and federally-owned parks and recreational facilities available for use by county residents. [9J-5.014(3)(b)2 and 4]

Policy 1201.8.1

Monroe County shall enter into an interlocal agreement with the Monroe County School Board which will provide for use of school-based recreation areas by county residents. This agreement shall set forth responsibilities for maintenance, expansion and operating hours at school-based facilities which will be made available for use by county residents. This agreement shall be reviewed on an annual basis. [9J-5.014(3)(c)2 and 5]

Policy 1201.8.2

Monroe County, through the Planning Department, Land Authority and/or Public Facilities Maintenance staff, shall initiate discussions with the Department of Natural Resources to determine the potential for use of state-owned lands for activity-based and/or resource-based neighborhood and community parks. Through negotiations, the County shall strive to secure special consideration for County residents, such as reduced fees or special use permits for certain times or locations, for the use of existing state recreational facilities.

The County shall also encourage the construction of and participate in the planning of new recreational facilities on state-owned lands. If necessary, the County shall enter into an interlocal agreement with DNR. [9J-5.014(3)(c)2 and 5]

Policy 1201.8.3

Monroe County, through the Planning Department, Land Authority and/or Public Facilities Maintenance staff, shall continue to coordinate with the U.S. Navy to determine the potential for use of Navy-owned lands for activity-based and/or resource-based neighborhood and community parks. Through negotiations, the County shall encourage the construction of new recreational facilities on Navy-owned lands, and shall strive to secure the use of new facilities for County residents. The County shall also review and comment on the plans for any new facilities proposed for use by County residents. If necessary, the County shall enter into an interlocal agreement with the U.S. Navy. [9J-5.014(3)(c)2 and 5]

Policy 1201.8.4

Monroe County, through the Planning Department, Land Authority and/or Public Facilities Maintenance staff, shall initiate discussions with the National Park Service (NPS) to determine the potential for use of NPS-owned parcels for activity-based or resource-based neighborhood and community parks. Through negotiations, the County shall strive to secure special consideration for County residents, such as reduced fees or special use permits for certain times or locations, for the use of existing NPS recreational facilities. The County shall also consider a joint County-NPS effort to plan and construct new recreational facilities on NPS-owned lands, if County residents were guaranteed a high priority in access to the facilities. If necessary, the County shall enter into an interlocal agreement with the NPS. [9J-5.014(3)(c)2 and 5]

Objective 1201.9

By January 4, 1998, Monroe County shall establish and fund a professionally staffed Parks and Recreation Department. [9J-5.014(3)(b)3]

Policy 1201.9.1

By January 4, 1998, there shall be an interdivisional agreement between the Division of Public Works and the Division of Growth Management providing for the development and organization of the Monroe County Parks and Recreation Department. [9J-5.014(3)(c)1 to 5]

Policy 1201.9.2

By January 4, 1998, the BOCC, in cooperation with the Monroe County Public Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, shall approve and fund organization of the Monroe County Parks and Recreation Department. [9J-5.014(3)(c)1 to 5]

Policy 1201.9.3

Until such time as the Monroe County Parks and Recreation Department is organized, planning and management of county-owned parks and recreation facilities shall be undertaken by the Division of Growth Management and the Division of Public Works, respectively. [9J-5.014(3)(c)1 to 5]

Objective 1201.10

By January 4, 1998, Monroe County shall complete a Parks and Recreation Plan. [9J-5.014(2)(b)1 to 4]

Policy 1201.10.1

The Parks and Recreation Plan shall address the following issues:

1. inventory of recreation lands and facilities;
2. demand for recreation lands and facilities;
3. level of service standards;
4. development and acquisition;
5. public access; and
6. management and maintenance. [9J-5.014(3)(c)5]

Policy 1201.10.2

The preparation of the Parks and Recreation Plan will include a public participation program in order to determine the demand for recreation areas and facilities.

Policy 1201.10.3

Level of service standards for recreation lands and facilities will be modified to reflect the demand for recreation lands and facilities as determined through the public participation program.

Objective 1201.11

Monroe County shall manage all park and recreation facilities for which it has assumed management responsibility according to management plans. [9J-5.014(3)(b)1 and 2]

Policy 1201.11.1

Beginning in 1998, Monroe County shall prepare annual park and recreation facility management plans. These plans shall be prepared by September 30th of each year. They shall be consistent with the current county restoration plan (see Conservation and Coastal Management Objective 210.1 and related policies). [9J-5.014(3)(c)3 and 5]

Policy 1201.11.2

Management plans for individual park and recreation units shall be consistent with goals, objectives and policies established in the following:

1. the master plan for the specific park and recreation facility;
2. the Monroe County Park and Recreation Plan (upon its adoption by the BOCC) (see Objective 1201.10); and

3. the Land Use Element and the Conservation and Coastal Management Element of the Monroe County Year 2010 Comprehensive Plan. [9J-5.014(3)(c)3 and 5]

Policy 1201.11.3

Park management plans shall be designed so as to avoid and/or mitigate adverse impacts of park use upon sensitive natural resources. Such areas include, but are not limited to the following:

1. high quality undisturbed pineland and hammock vegetation;
2. documented habitat of species designated as rare or endangered by the state and federal governments;
3. undisturbed beach/berm (particularly turtle nesting beaches); and
4. undisturbed mangrove, salt marsh, buttonwood and freshwater wetlands.

Public use shall be directed away from or minimized in such areas through controlled access and limitations on permitted activities. [9J-5.014(3)(c)3 and 5]

Policy 1201.11.4

For parks which include beaches and shoreline areas, park management plans shall provide for the maintenance and/or improvement of existing levels of beach and shore access. [9J-5.014(3)(c)3 and 5]

Policy 1201.11.5

Park management plans shall identify areas of disturbed wetlands as potential wetlands mitigation sites. (See Conservation and Coastal Management Element Policy 204.3.2.) [9J-5.014(3)(c)2 and 5]

Policy 1201.11.6

Park management plans shall include provisions for removal of invasive, exotic vegetation. (See Conservation and Coastal Management Element Objective 210.1 and policies.) [9J-5.014(3)(c)2 and 5]

Policy 1201.11.7

Park management plans shall specify the use of native vegetation for landscaping and for restoration of areas from which invasive, exotic vegetation is removed. [Policy 9J-5.014(3)(c)2 and 5]

Objective 1201.12

By January 4, 1998, Monroe County shall develop and implement a cooperative land management program designed to protect open space (conservation lands) from the impacts of land use activities on adjacent private lands. (See Future Land Use Objective 102.9 and related policies.) [9J-5.014(3)(b)1 and 2]

Objective 1201.13

By January 4, 1998, Monroe County shall establish and implement the Monroe County Natural Heritage and Park Program. The purpose of this program shall be to acquire lands and open space in the public interest for conservation and recreation purposes. (See Future Land Use Objective 102.4 and related policies.) [9J-5.014(3)(b)1 and 2]

